

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
LUFKIN DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

V.

GEORGE KENNETH BENTON

§
§
§
§
§

NO. 9:12-CR-25

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON
THE DEFENDANT'S COMPETENCY TO STAND TRIAL**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and the Local Rules for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, this criminal proceeding is before the undersigned United States magistrate judge.

On July 12, 2012, the court ordered a psychiatric or psychological exam to determine if the Defendant was suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent he is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense. (Docket No. 13.) The Defendant subsequently received an evaluation by Randall Rattan, Ph.D., Forensic Psychologist at the Federal Detention Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Rattan evaluated the Defendant from September 28 through October 26, 2012.

The psychiatric report concludes that, in the opinion of Dr. Rattan, the Defendant is mentally competent to stand trial. The report indicates there is no evidence to indicate that the Defendant suffers from a mental disorder that would substantially impair his present ability to understand the nature and consequences of the court proceedings against him, or his ability to properly assist counsel in his defense.

A competency hearing was conducted on December 6, 2012. At the hearing, the Defendant appeared in court with counsel. Counsel for the Defendant did not present any objections to the report. Neither party objected to the admissibility of the psychological report detailing the results and findings, therefore, the court admitted it into evidence under seal. Furthermore, both the Defendant and the Government agreed that he was competent to stand trial.

The undersigned therefore concludes that the Defendant is able to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him and to assist properly in his defense. The Defendant has a rational and factual understanding of the proceeding against him, and has sufficient present ability to consult with his attorney with a reasonable degree of rational understanding. 18 U.S.C. § 4241(d); see also Dusky v. United States, 362 U.S. 402, 80 S. Ct. 788, 4 L. Ed. 2d 824 (1960).

RECOMMENDATION

The court should find the Defendant competent to stand trial because he understands the nature and consequences of the proceeding against him and is able to assist in his defense. See 18 U.S.C. § 4241. It is further recommended that the speedy trial time be excluded from July 12, 2012 until the date on which the District Judge signs the order adopting this report and recommendation.

OBJECTIONS

Objections to this report must be: (1) specific, (2) in writing, and (3) served and filed within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of this report. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 1(a), 6(b), and 72(b). A party's failure to object bars that party from:

(1) entitlement to de novo review by a district judge of proposed findings and recommendations, see Rodriguez v. Bowen, 857 F.2d 275, 276-77 (5th Cir. 1988), and (2) appellate review, except on grounds of plain error of unobjected-to factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the district court, see Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n., 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc). The constitutional safeguards afforded by Congress and the courts require that, when a party takes advantage of his right to object to a magistrate's findings or recommendation, a district judge must exercise its nondelegable authority by considering the actual evidence and not merely by reviewing and blindly adopting the magistrate's report and recommendation. See Hernandez v. Estelle, 711 F.2d 619, 620 (5th Cir. 1983); United States v. Elsoffer, 644 F.2d 357, 359 (5th Cir. 1981) (per curiam).

SIGNED this 6th day of December, 2012.



Zack Hawthorn
United States Magistrate Judge